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SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-ninth year

Letter dated 19 July 1994 from the Permanent Representative of Croatia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Recently there have been increased efforts by the Serb leaders in Belgrade, Banja Luka and Knin to promote false allegations that all those who declared themselves as "Yugoslavs" in the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia were, in fact, Serbs by nationality. A recent example of this can be seen in the letter dated 29 June 1994 from the Deputy Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of the "Federal Republic of Yugoslavia" (Serbia and Montenegro) addressed to the Secretary-General (A/49/218-S/1994/801), in which he claimed that, in reference to the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, "Serbs were almost the only ones who declared themselves Yugoslavs".

This false claim seeks to demonstrate that the total number of Serbs in the Republic of Croatia, as well as in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, is much greater than it ever was or presently is. The exaggeration of the number of Serbs in the two Republics serves several purposes, the foremost of which are to justify acquisition of territory by force by claiming that the occupied regions contained more Serbs than they actually did and to exaggerate the decline of the Serbian population in certain regions owing to the war by claiming that the decline in the number of "Yugoslavs" actually represents a decline in the number of Serbs and, therefore, to inflate the total number of Serbian refugees and displaced persons.

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* A/49/50/Rev.1.

These claims can easily by refuted by looking at the official 1981 and 1991 census data in the Republic of Croatia as provided below. It should be noted that the 1991 census was conducted prior to the outbreak of warfare.

	1981	1991
Total	4 601 469	4 784 265
Croats	3 454 661	3 736 356
Serbs	531 502	581 663
Yugoslavs	379 057	106 041

As can be seen, the above data shows that the total number of those identifying themselves as "Yugoslavs" in the Republic of Croatia declined by 273,016 from 1981 to 1991. At the same time, the total number of Serbs increased by 50,161, while the total number of Croats increased by 281,695. When one takes into account that the total population of Croatia increased by 182,796 during that period, it becomes clear that the overwhelming majority of those who identified themselves as "Yugoslavs" in the 1981 census were, in fact, Croats by nationality.

In order to understand the reasons for the change in national identification by persons residing in the Republic of Croatia, it is important to note that there was a steep increase in the number of those declaring themselves as "Yugoslavs" in the Republic of Croatia from 1971 to 1981. In the official census of 1971, only 84,118 persons declared themselves as "Yugoslavs" in the Republic of Croatia, while the number of "Yugoslavs" in Croatia in the official 1981 census more than quadrupled to 379,057. During this same period, according to the official censuses, the number of Croats in the Republic of Croatia declined by 58,986.

A major reason for this is that during the 1970s there was a crackdown by the Belgrade regime on a democratic movement within Croatia which sought greater civil, political and national rights for the Croatian people and all other residents of the Republic of Croatia. This movement was generally referred to as the "Croatian Spring". In its brutal crackdown of this movement, the Belgrade regime imprisoned and beat thousands of people in Croatia, while it sent out assassination squads to murder Croat dissidents living in exile. The Belgrade regime justified its brutal crackdown by falsely claiming that the "Croatian Spring" was motivated by extreme nationalism.

As a result of this crackdown, certain Croats thought it advantageous to declare themselves as "Yugoslavs" in the official 1981 census. However, in 1991, when the Republic of Croatia had largely succeeded in ridding itself of Belgrade's domination, many of these same individuals again declared themselves as Croats.

On the basis of the above information, it is clear that the census of 1991 should be used as an indicator of the national composition of the Republic of Croatia, as it more accurately reflects the actual national structure of the Republic at that time.

I certainly hope that the above data will be kept in mind when fabricated claims are made by certain Serbian representatives in regard to the number of Serbs living in Croatia or Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as to the number of Serb refugees and displaced persons.

I would be grateful for your kind assistance in circulating the present letter as a document of the General Assembly, under items 103 and 104 (c) of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mario NOBILO
Ambassador
Permanent Representative